



## Office of Management's Monthly Newsletter

# The Beacon

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Food Safety and Inspection Service  
Office of Management  
Ronald Hicks, Deputy Administrator

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**bea-con** (bê' ken) *noun*

A signaling or guiding device, such as a lighthouse, located on a coast. A source of guidance or inspiration.

### RON'S CORNER

#### Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANRRS)

*By Ron Hicks  
Deputy Administrator  
Office of Management*

The Food Safety and Inspection Service attended the Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANRRS) 16th Annual Career Fair and Training Conference last month in Arlington, VA. MANRRS is a national society made up of minority students studying agricultural sciences and related fields at the high school, undergraduate and graduate level from colleges and universities all over the country, as well as at the professional level. Its main objective is to foster partnerships between academic institutions, government agencies, and industry seeking to diversify their organization with well-qualified employees.

Each year at the National Conference, student members of the various MANRRS chapters are given the opportunity to network with other students and professionals, exchange ideas and information, attend workshop and training sessions, visit Career Fair booths, distribute resumes, explore employment opportunities, investigate graduate school possibilities, and seek internships and scholarships. FSIS was represented at this year's Career Fair by Perry Davis and Stacy Womack of OPPDE, Pattie Schulke of HRD and Nisha Oatman of OPHS. They manned a booth, collected approximately 25 resumes, and spoke with some of the brightest students in attendance.

Participation in this conference was an excellent opportunity for the Agency and its program areas to gain visibility, provide employment information to the outside community, to accomplish the Agency's mission by providing access to the best employees available through recruitment, hiring, training, and recognition of a diverse workforce. Thanks for the continuing support from Sheila Clemons of the Civil Rights Division and Cynthia Mercado, Special Assistant to the Administrator.

For more information on MANRRS, or to request student information, feel free to contact our FSIS liaison, Perry Davis, at 601-965-4312, or Nisha Oatman at 202-690-6485.

#### Memorial Bench for California Food Investigator Bill Shaline

*By Pamela K. Shintaku, California Dept of Food & Agriculture  
Telephone: 916-654-0881*

The California Department of Food and Agriculture is sponsoring the dedication of a bench in Capitol Park (Sacramento, CA) to the memory of Bill Shaline. This bench will be placed in a very peaceful, shaded location near 13th and N Street, in close proximity to a near-by lamppost. We hope to be able to purchase the bench and dedicate it this summer, possibly in early July, near Bill's birthday, which is July 7th. This bench will be fully funded by private donations.

Bill had many friends and colleagues who expressed interest in a memorial. For more information regarding this memorial and dedication, please contact Tammy Hernandez or Sarah Mejia at 916-654-0881.

*Editor's Note: Inspector Shaline was killed in the line of duty along with USDA Compliance Officers Jean Hillery and Tom Quadros on June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2000.*

**Secretary Ann M. Veneman  
Outlines Food Safety Priorities at the Food Safety Summit**

Secretary Ann Veneman today outlined priorities for food safety in remarks made at the annual Food Safety Summit. Veneman released data showing continued declines in Salmonella prevalence in raw meat and poultry products, and pledged to continue working to strengthen food safety programs. "USDA's commitment to food safety remains strong," said Veneman. "We will continue working to strengthen food safety programs and find ways to work with all sectors of the food chain to ensure high consumer confidence in our food supply."

Veneman noted that the President's proposed budget provides a \$21 million increase in spending for food safety programs, including fully funding 7,600 meat and poultry inspectors in FY 2002. She outlined the following food safety principles for USDA:

- Encouraging a cooperative approach to food safety policy that integrates research, public health regulation, and education that can lead to the formulation of effective public policy.
- Working to ensure that all food safety policies are based on sound scientific principles.
- Continuing to educate the public about all aspects of food safety, from testing we do at USDA to safe handling practices for consumers. The "Fight Bac!" campaign, which promotes the four basic food safety rules—Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill—is a good example of an effective public/private education partnership.
- Ensuring that USDA's food safety policy-making process continues to be transparent and that the public has the opportunity to provide input and to be fully involved.
- Encouraging public-private partnerships to address food safety problems.
- Strengthening cooperative working relationships with other agencies of federal and state governments involved in food safety, citing the Pathogen and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point system (HACCP) as an excellent example.

Veneman also announced the release of a Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) report showing that the prevalence of Salmonella in raw meat and poultry has decreased since the implementation of HACCP in 1998. Under this science-based system, establishments develop plans to prevent hazards and reduce pathogens and FSIS tests for Salmonella in order to verify that industry food safety systems are effective in controlling contamination of raw meat and poultry products. The report released today is the first aggregate data on all sizes of plants, including data from very small plants, which came under HACCP in January 2000.

"Perhaps the most extraordinary thing about HACCP is its ability to evolve to address today's issues and prevent tomorrow's problems," said Veneman. "These figures help show that HACCP is working and we are seeing sustained reductions in foodborne illness as well. However, we must continuously review and examine all of our efforts to ensure the protection of our food supply."

The new data demonstrate that all categories of product show improvement over baseline studies conducted prior to HACCP implementation. Combined test results of all sized plants show lower Salmonella prevalence levels in 1998-2000 than in baseline studies: broilers average 10.2 percent under HACCP, compared to 20 percent baseline; market hogs average 7.0 percent compared to 8.7 percent; cows and bulls average 2.1 percent compared to 2.7 percent; steers and heifers average 0.3 percent compared to 1.0 percent; ground beef averages 3.7 percent compared to 7.5 percent; ground chicken averages 14.4 percent compared to 44.6 percent; and ground turkey averages 29.7 percent compared to 49.9 percent.

Since the implementation of HACCP, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has reported a reduction in the number of foodborne illnesses associated with meat and poultry products. Salmonella is one of the leading causes of foodborne illness. Consumption of food contaminated with Salmonella can cause salmonellosis and poor handling practices can lead to cross-contamination of other foods. Salmonella infections can be life-threatening, especially for infants, the frail or elderly, and persons with chronic disease, with HIV infection, or taking chemotherapy. The most common manifestations of salmonellosis are diarrhea, abdominal cramps, and fever within eight to 72 hours. Additional symptoms may be chills, headache, nausea, and vomiting that can last up to seven days.

Details of the latest report and food safety information, as well as prepared remarks by Secretary Veneman, can be found at <http://www.usda.gov>.

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**TRAVEL**

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**The Joy of Travel "Issues"**

*By the Fiscal Services Branch, Budget Division*

*Telephone: 202-720-4590*

If a train leaves the East Coast and another train leaves the West Coast at the same time, each bound for College Station, traveling at 65mph, how long will it take the FSIS passengers to find their luggage that was mistakenly sent to College Station, *Arkansas* rather than College Station, *Texas*?

Travel questions can often seem like those mind-bending word problems we all faced in math class. Just when you think you have it mapped out, there's a new twist in the road, and you're left going nowhere. The members of the Fiscal Services Branch (FSB), part of the Budget Division, are here to provide assistance to employees on a number of fiscal matters related to travel.

The Fiscal Services Branch is divided into two sections, *Temporary Duty Travel* and *Relocation Travel*. The mission of the Temporary Duty Section is to provide uniform guidance to employees on all issues relating to temporary duty travel. The Relocation Section coordinates nearly 300 relocations each fiscal year, at an annual cost of between 3 to 5 million dollars.

*Kelly Litchfield, Office Automation Clerk* – Serves as the office support for the Branch. One of her duties is to direct your calls to the staff member that can best help answer your question. Please feel free to call Kelly if you are uncertain which staff member is best able to help you. She can be reached at 202-720-4590 or on email at [Kelly.Litchfield@usda.gov](mailto:Kelly.Litchfield@usda.gov).

**Temporary Duty Travel Section**

*Robert Cooke, Financial Specialist* – Robert serves as the team leader for the Temporary Duty Travel Section of FSB. Robert is also the contact person for the Atlanta, Philadelphia, Pickerington, Salem and Springdale District Offices. You can call Robert at 202-720-5501 or email him at [Robert.Cooke@usda.gov](mailto:Robert.Cooke@usda.gov).

*Kristi Akers, Financial Specialist* – Kristi handles foreign travel issues for the Branch. She also provides travel policy guidelines for employees located at headquarters. You can contact Kristi at 202-720-5068 or email her at [Kristi.Akers@usda.gov](mailto:Kristi.Akers@usda.gov).

*Dawn Ruffner, Program Analyst* – Dawn coordinates the government issued credit card program. She also serves as the agency's contact with the Travel Management Centers. Dawn is also the point of contact on other fiscal issues for the Alameda, Albany, Beltsville, Boulder, Chicago and Raleigh District Offices. Dawn can be reached at 202-720-2210 or on email at [Dawn.Ruffner@usda.gov](mailto:Dawn.Ruffner@usda.gov).

*Walayna Sherard, Financial Specialist* – Walayna responds to questions involving unique travel situations. Her work, along with other staff members, involves researching Comptroller General and GSA Board of Contract Appeals decisions. Walayna serves as the contact for the Dallas, Des Moines, Jackson, Lawrence, Madison and Minneapolis District Offices. You can contact her at 202-720-6280 or on email at [Walayna.Sherard@usda.gov](mailto:Walayna.Sherard@usda.gov).

*Janice Carpenter, Program Analyst* – Janice handles Tort Claims, Waivers and Offsets. Say an employee has the misfortune of being in an accident while operating a government vehicle - they'll likely get to speak with Janice. She can be reached at 202-720-6756 or on email at [Janice.Carpenter@usda.gov](mailto:Janice.Carpenter@usda.gov).

**Relocation Travel Section**

*Frances Wilches, Financial Specialist* – Frances is the team leader for the Relocation Travel Section of FSB, and serves as the Relocation Program Service Coordinator for the Agency. You can reach Frances at 202-720-9605 or on email at [Frances.Wilches@usda.gov](mailto:Frances.Wilches@usda.gov).

*Gary Smith, Financial Specialist* – Gary coordinates relocations for employees in the Technical Service Center, Financial Processing Center, Headquarters, Atlanta, Jackson, Philadelphia, Albany, Beltsville, Des Moines and Springdale Districts. Gary can be reached at 202-720-6066 or on email at [Gary.Smith@usda.gov](mailto:Gary.Smith@usda.gov).

*Donna Moore, Financial Specialist* – Donna is the relocation contact for employees working in Human Resources Field Operations, Raleigh, Dallas, Chicago, Minneapolis, Boulder, and Lawrence Districts. You can reach Donna at 202-720-0233 or on email at [Donna.Moore@usda.gov](mailto:Donna.Moore@usda.gov).

*Joyce Smith, Financial Specialist* – Joyce coordinates relocations in the Madison, Pickerington, Alameda, and Salem Districts. Contact Joyce at 202-720-0827 or on email at [Joyce.Smith@usda.gov](mailto:Joyce.Smith@usda.gov).

## VDIP

### **Positions and Interests** By Milo Christianson, LERD *Telephone: 612-370-2000*

A key concept of conflict resolution is the difference between positions and interests. When a conflict develops, the disputing parties generally develop competing positions on various issues. A "position" is what a person says he or she wants. Positions are generally short term, situational, very specific, and relatively visible. They are usually an obstacle to resolution, rather than a basis for resolution. An "interest" is the underlying reason why a person takes a position. An interest is what a person needs to resolve the conflict. Interests are generally internal, less visible, relatively unchanging, and more general in concept. Unlike positions, they serve as a basis for resolution. Common interests include such things as security, respect, support, power and harmony.

To illustrate the difference between positions and interests, we can use the example of two people who are fighting over an office window. In this case, one person wants the window open, and the other wants it closed. These are their positions. However, since a window cannot be open and shut at the same time, this particular conflict would seem to be based on incompatible, irreconcilable positions. A mutually agreeable solution would seem to be impossible.

It is at this point that the parties, if they want to resolve their dispute, must try to identify their mutual interest(s). In this particular case, for example, the parties may simply want to be comfortable. Comfort is their common interest. If this is the case, they can begin to look at their conflict in different, and broader, terms. It may no longer matter whether the window is open or shut if the parties are able to find other options for achieving an acceptable level of comfort.

Sometimes it is difficult for people in conflict to identify their mutual interests. But if they are able to do so, they may be able to open up a whole new range of resolution possibilities, and dramatically increase the likelihood of a successful, win/win outcome.

## SUPPLIES

### **Title 18 Poster - GSADC-8911101946** By Pete Bridgeman, Administrative Services Division *Telephone: 301-504-4222*

This item is currently available at the Field Supply Center (FSC). Recently issued FSIS Notice 13-01, (3/21/01), "Firearms in Work Establishments", has an error regarding this poster. This should *not* be ordered by calling into the Field Supply Center. They are not in a position to handle phone-in orders from the entire field at this time. For this reason, called-in orders for this item will not be filled. This item may be ordered from the FSC through normal ordering procedures, on a CFPDC-1.

### **Export Stamps**

Please do not send anymore broken or damaged export stamps (FSIS-03) back to Beltsville. We have gotten enough in to demonstrate the more common problems that have been experienced to the vendors, which will hopefully result in an improved stamp next time we purchase them. We thank those of you who have taken the time to send your damaged stamps into us - this has been a big help in our effort to improve this item.

### **Listing of Newer Items**

Below is a list of all Supply and Specialty Items added to the Field Supply Center's inventory since our last addendum to the catalog was issued in August, 1999 (FSIS-CAT-ADD1). We will be issuing an updated catalog in the near future. However, a number of requests have been made to publish a list of newer items until that happens. Here it is!

<u>Item #</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Unit</u>
FSIS-53-IB	Ibuprofen	BTL
FSIS-64	Grease Pen	DZ
FSIS-65	Stamp Dispenser	EA
FSIS-66	Hog Rings	BX100
Freezer Jackets		EA
<i>(Order by size: FSIS-67-SM, FSIS-67-MD, FSIS-67-LG, FSIS-67-XL, FSIS-67-2XL, FSIS-67-3XL)</i>		
FSIS-68	Miracool Bandanas	DZ
<i>Sqwinchers - Order by Flavor:</i>		
FSIS-69-OR	Orange	BX50
FSIS-69-LL	Lemon-Lime	BX50
FSIS-69-FP	Fruit Punch	BX50
FSIS-70	Knuckle Bandage	BX100
FSIS-71	Foam Corded Ear Plug	PR
<i>Resealable Sample Bags</i>		
FSIS-72-QT	Quart Size	BX50
FSIS-72-GAL	Gallon Size	BX50
FSIS-72-2GL	2 Gallon Size	BX50
1011	Carbonless Paper	Ream
1118	Cartridge for 350C (Black)	EA
4890	Cartridge for 350C (Color)	EA
	<i>(Also for 600,660C,680C DeskJet and 720C Office Jet)</i>	
1190	Cartridge for 720C (Black)	EA
	<i>(Also for 600, 660C &amp; 680C Series DeskJet Printers)</i>	
3592	Clipboard w/ 2-hole prongs	EA
4839	Folders, Manila, Letter Size,	
	1/5 Cut	HD
5258	File Dividers - Tab Left	HD
5266	File Dividers - Tab Middle	HD
7823	Blank Business Cards	PKG
58074	CD Rom Holder	EA

## HUMAN RESOURCES

### Leave Without Pay (LWOP) Reminder

*By Human Resources Field Office Telephone: 1-800-370-3747*

Employees considering the use of Leave Without Pay (LWOP) should carefully review FSIS Directive 4630.2, Part Four, for specific guidance. LWOP must be requested and approved *before* an employee may be placed in this temporary non-pay status. Since the level of approval required varies with the length of the LWOP period requested, a written request should be forwarded well in advance of the requested effective date to allow movement of the request through supervisory and administrative channels. If the LWOP request is due to medical complications, supporting medical documentation should be submitted with the request.

### Badge Encasement

Inspectors and compliance officers who have at least 20 years of service and who are planning to retire in the near future can have their badges or credentials encased in Lucite as a memento. (See FSIS Directive 4831.3.)

To do this, please forward a written request to HRFO no later than the effective date of retirement. When making your request, please include the following information:

Name of requester

Badge number

Job title

Social security number

Number of years of service (must be at least 20)

Address of where badge is to be sent (home or office)

Type of retirement (voluntary or disability)

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Mary Weber at 1-800-370-3747, ext. 2609.

### **Revised Merit Promotion Application Procedures**

The Human Resources Division recently changed a long-standing procedure concerning merit promotion applications.

For years, FSIS vacancy announcements required that employees submit a performance appraisal that is "no more than 15 months old" with their application when applying for a position through the merit promotion program. Employees and other Federal applicants who did not have a current appraisal were instructed to provide a justification statement explaining why an appraisal was not submitted. Applications without a current appraisal or a justification statement were screened out as incomplete.

Agency vacancy announcements now request that employees submit their "most recent performance appraisal", without regard to the "15 month old" requirement. Most importantly, the servicing human resources offices will no longer screen out applications that do not include a performance appraisal.

This procedure was changed to be more practical, recognizing that, although employees normally receive an appraisal annually, the appraisal process can be delayed for a variety of reasons. Also, an employee or job candidate can furnish a copy of his or her appraisal directly to the selecting official, upon request. For example, a selecting official may ask for a copy of the most recent appraisal at the time of interview or at another time during the screening process.

Employees are still encouraged to submit a complete application package, including their most recent performance appraisal. The performance appraisal supplements the application with additional information about the individual's knowledge, skills, abilities, and recent accomplishments. This information can be helpful to a promotion panel when they evaluate applications, and to selecting officials when they review applications to make a selection decision.

If you have questions, please contact your servicing personnel staffing specialist on 1-800-370-3747 for field positions or on 202-720-6617 for headquarters positions.

### **"Focus" On Employees' Thoughts**

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM), as a followup to the all-employee survey conducted last year, will be conducting several focus group sessions throughout the Agency during the month of May. The focus groups will bring small groups of employees together to discuss areas of challenge in FSIS. Through these sessions, OPM hopes to gain a better understanding of employees' thoughts related to issues most important to their worklife. The focus group input, together with the results of the survey, will aid OPM in analyzing and making recommendations for constructive change in FSIS.

### **VMO Survey Results --- 4 out of 5 Agency Doctors Recommend FSIS**

The slogan for a sugarless chewing gum claims that 4 out of 5 dentists recommend their product. We have similar bragging rights in FSIS. Recent survey results show that more than 4 out of 5 Agency Doctors Recommend FSIS to other Veterinarians, and they are generating many new hires with this positive "word-of-mouth".

The Human Resources Division sent out a brief survey to ask the Veterinarians who work in the field at the GS-9, GS-11 and GS-12 levels a few questions related to recruitment. The questionnaire was distributed to 903 Veterinary Medical Officers and Supervisory Veterinary Medical Officers. The respondents were asked to indicate what had the biggest impact on getting them to apply with FSIS. There were 517 respondents for a response rate of 57 percent.

81% of those surveyed said they would recommend FSIS to colleagues in one or more different categories (recent graduates, small animal practitioners, and large animal practitioners). The survey results also indicated that with 41%, "word-of-mouth", via VMO's has the single largest impact on getting veterinarians to apply with FSIS. The significance of

"word-of-mouth" as a recruitment method cannot be understated. This mirrored results of the recent NAFV Survey – both surveys identified "word-of-mouth" as the most common reason for joining FSIS.

Overall, the results suggest that FSIS should, by and large, continue with current recruitment efforts, and ensure that such efforts are well rounded. Specifically,

- Where national advertising has resulted in recent new hires, it should be continued. The AVMA Journal advertisements have been particularly successful in this regard.
- Recruitment trips are useful and should be continued because they provide veterinary students with exposure to the Agency and "plant the seeds" for future hires.
- The Agency should build on the strength of "word-of-mouth" recruitment. The Human Resources Division will continue to explore opportunities to coordinate grass roots recruitment more effectively and to help all employees see themselves as "recruiters."

The information from the survey should prove useful as the Agency plans future recruitment efforts. The Human Resources Division would like to pass along special thanks to all those VMO's and SVMO's who took the time to respond to the written survey.

### **How Long Does It Take Human Resources (HR). . .**

. . . to process an employee suggestion? . . . to establish a new position? . . . to forward information on retirement to employees? The answer to these and other questions about the services that HR provides is contained in their new *Customer Service Plan*. In a effort to improve upon and/or maintain the quality of service provided to FSIS employees, the Human Resources Division, working with our customers, has identified the services most important to our customers and developed specific timeliness standards for those services. Along with service timeframes, the plan relays HR's mission, vision, values, and renewed commitment to providing quality service to the employees of FSIS.

The *HRD Customer Service Plan* has been distributed to all offices. We encourage all employees who have not received a copy to view it on the HR Homepage, <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/om/hrd/default.htm>. If you would like a hard copy of the plan, please call (202) 720-7983. Employee's comments on the services HR provides are always welcome. In the coming year, HR will be surveying FSIS employees to determine their effectiveness in meeting these quality and timeliness standards.

### **NFC's Employee Personal Page**

USDA employees with access to the Internet are able to view some of their own payroll, travel, and insurance data through a National Finance Center (NFC) Internet web site. NFC calls this the Employee Personal Page.

To access the information, you will need a personal identification number (PIN), which you must request via the Internet the first time you access the Employee Personal Page, and a web browser that supports 128-bit Secure Socket Layer (SSL) encryption (United States version). Standard web browsers usually support only 40-bit SSL encryption, but most software developers, i.e., Microsoft, Netscape, etc., have upgrades that can be downloaded from the company's' Internet sites. NFC's web site address is <http://www.nfc.usda.gov>.

### **The Government May Owe You Money!!**

"The Earned Income Credit (EIC)" is a tax credit for certain people who work and have earned income under \$32,152. So begins the compelling 56-page IRS publication 596, Earned Income Credit. (And you thought that government bureaucrats didn't have much literary talent!)

Here are the basics on the Earned Income Credit. In 2000, if you earned less than \$27,413 and have one qualifying child living with you, *or* you earned less than \$31,152 and have more than one qualifying child living with you, *or* you earned less than \$10,380 and do not have a qualifying child living with you, *then* you may be able to get the Earned Income Credit. You also may be able to get the Advanced Earned Income Credit in your paycheck. You would need to be eligible, fill out Form W-5, Earned Income Credit Advance Payment Certificate, and mail the form to your servicing human resources office. The human resources office could then include part of the credit regularly in your pay.



If you think you may be eligible, we encourage you to investigate this further. The full publication, and other IRS information, may be obtained on their web site at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov), or by calling 1-800-829-3676.

### **Federal Income Tax Withholding – W-4**

Now that you have finished filing your tax returns, do you want to change the number of exemptions? Is too much federal tax being withheld or not enough? Before you decide to submit a new W-4, check your earnings statement for what is currently being withheld from your salary check.

The only employees who are required to file a new W-4 are those that claim exempt from Federal tax withholding. Those employees (usually from Puerto Rico) must file a new W-4 at the beginning of the year or the National Finance Center will change the Federal tax withholding to \$00, single with 0 exemptions.

IRS regulations can be very complicated, so you may wish to refer to IRS publications and worksheets which may be obtained at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) or by calling toll free 1-800-829-3676. If you decide to make a change, a W-4 may be submitted directly to your Servicing Personnel Office at any time. You can order the W-4 through HRFO's fax-on-demand service at 1-800-370-3747(index number #9404), by calling the same number and having it mailed, or from the Field Supply Center, through normal procedures (unit of issue is EA). It can also be obtained directly from the IRS, and is available on the IRS website at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

### **Update On The Payment Of Relocation Allowances In Shortage Locations: New In-Plant Shortage Areas Identified**

In the March 2001 edition of the Beacon, we discussed FSIS Directive 3820.3, which provides for the payment of relocation allowances for employees who transfer, at the same grade level to permanent in-plant positions in shortage locations. Specifically, employees will receive travel and relocation payments for reassignments or transfers, at the same grade level, from one duty station to another station that is outside the employee's commuting area if the new duty station is an in-plant location which presently has a severe shortage of candidates. A shortage area is defined as one where recruitment incentives are needed as a result of numerous unsuccessful attempts to fill positions in that location.

We have recently designated several new "shortage locations" and they are:

- *Food Inspectors GS-7:*  
Storm Lake, IA
- *Veterinary Medical Officers (11):*  
Guymon, OK
- *Veterinary Medical Officers (11/12)*  
Ft Morgan, Greeley, and Colorado Springs, CO  
Hudsonville, MI  
Abbotsford, Milwaukee, and Sun Prairie, WI

The shortage location reassignment procedure is separate from the voluntary reassignment system and does not replace it. The voluntary reassignment system will continue to be operated by the Human Resources Field Office (HRFO) in Minneapolis. Relocation allowances will not be paid when the employee submits a voluntary reassignment application for an in-plant position that is NOT in a shortage location, or when the reassignment is from a position in one shortage location to another shortage location.

To indicate your availability for an assignment to a shortage location, submit a Form FSIS 4335-3, for those locations only, directly to the District office where the position is located. The District Office continues to maintain the authority to make the final selection decision and, as a result, may make selections from other sources (e.g. an OPM certificate), in addition to this process.

The above locations have been designated as shortage locations through January 30, 2002. At that time, the locations will be reevaluated to determine whether the designation is still applicable and if relocation allowances will continue to be paid.

For more information, please contact your servicing personnel specialist in HRFO at 1-800-370-3747.

### **Progress Reviews (A-L Bargaining Unit Employees)**



According to the Collective Bargaining Agreement, Article XXI, Section B, periodic reviews between a bargaining unit employee and the rating supervisor shall take place every 4 months during the appraisal period. One of these reviews shall also coincide with the discussion of the annual performance rating. Therefore, for A-L employees, grades 1-12, the first 4-month review must be completed by July 1.

In conducting these reviews, refer to the progress review checklist in any User's Guide for specific points to cover in the discussion with the employee. Employee and supervisor should initial and date block 16 of the FSIS 4430-5 form to certify completion of the progress review discussion.

### **HR To Begin Testing Online Application And Referral System**

The Human Resources Division (HRD) is preparing to roll out "foodsafetyjobs online," an automated job application system that allows job seekers to view and apply for vacancies with the agency via the Internet. This new system will be tested beginning June 1.

#### *What is "foodsafetyjobs online"?*

"Foodsafetyjobs online" is a web-based automated applicant processing and rating software program. It uses the internet to build and post vacancies and ask the questions HR and selecting officials need in order to identify, evaluate and hire the best applicants. The Human Resources Division will begin testing this software during fiscal year 2001.

#### *Why try "foodsafetyjobs online"?*

The Human Resources Division is piloting "foodsafetyjobs online" to improve the efficiency and the time frames involved in hiring and promoting people. We expect that "foodsafetyjobs online" will:

- Streamline and automate the current application process;
- Reduce the time it takes to evaluate applicants and refer highly qualified candidates to the selecting official;
- Reduce overall time to hire, as well as promote;
- Allow applicants to certify themselves by answering a series of questions; and
- Allow HR professionals to manage the HR program rather than the process

#### *How will the "foodsafetyjobs online" pilot work?*

Vacancy announcements for the pilot series will be posted on FSIS HR web sites and USA Jobs. Applicants for these vacancies will be directed to a secure internet web site where they will create, or import, and store an electronic resume, as well as answer specific questions about their experience and education related to the vacant position. When the application period ends, the "foodsafetyjobs online" software evaluates each candidate using pre-determined criteria and ranks them to determine who are the best qualified for the position. These candidates are then referred to the selecting official.

#### *When is the "foodsafetyjobs online" pilot starting?*

The goal is to have the system ready to accept applications by June 1, 2001. The following series have been identified for testing during this pilot phase:

- GS-260, Equal Employment Opportunity Specialist
- GS-318, Secretary
- GS-334, Computer Specialist
- GS-343, Management and Program Analyst
- GS-344, Management and Program Assistant
- GS-601, Health Science Administration
- GS-1035, Public Affairs Specialist
- GS-1320, Chemist
- GS-1801, Compliance Officer (12/13 only)

Initially, the GS-318, GS-344, GS-334 and GS-260 will be implemented. The remaining series will be phased in during the test period.

#### *How will "foodsafetyjobs online" benefit the hiring manager?*

- The manager will have input into the selection of questions for their vacancies, in order to target candidates who possess the experience and/or education the manager has identified as most desirable;
- Managers can view names of the best-qualified applicants via a secure web site, following e-mail notification from Human Resources.
- It helps managers fill their vacancies more quickly.

*How will "foodsafetyjobs online" benefit the applicant?*

- As a web-based application, job seekers can apply to positions posted on the FSIS web site anytime from anywhere.
- Candidates can create an electronic resume and maintain it within the FSIS secured site. There is no need to create a new resume each time a candidate applies for a position, since the resume will be automatically associated with the on-line application. Or, candidates can import into the FSIS system an existing electronic resume for application purposes.
- Applicants are no longer required to respond to Job Elements (otherwise known as Knowledge, Skills and Abilities.) Candidates answer job-specific questions with the click of the mouse.
- Job seekers can receive automatic notification of vacancies in the agency for which they are eligible to apply.
- Candidates can apply online until midnight on the closing date of the announcement.

*How do I get more information?*

"Foodsafetyjobs online" updates will be posted to the FSIS Home Page and the HRD web site. For more information on the operation of the system, you can access [www.QuickHire.com](http://www.QuickHire.com). If you have more specific questions on the "foodsafetyjobs online" system, contact your servicing human resources staffing specialist in Washington, or Minneapolis.

### March/April Retirements

Thomas J. Barrett, SVMO, OFO, Thief River Falls, MN, 3/30/01, 11 years  
Harley B. Beckwith, CSI, OFO, Green Forest, AR, 3/30/01, 20 Years  
Margaret V. Cash, FI, OFO, Harrisonburg, VA, 3/30/01, 25 Years  
Jimmie G. Clutts, FI, OFO, Green Forest, AR, 3/24/01, 24 Years  
Francis A. Fantauzzi, CSI, OFO, Liverpool, NY, 3/31/01, 30 Years  
James B. Hersh, SVMO, OFO, Lexington, NE, 3/31/01, 23 Years  
In Suk Kim, Toxicologist, OPHS, Washington, DC, 3/30/01, 8 Years  
Raymond C. McCoy, FI, OFO, Rose Hill, NC, 4/03/01, 31 Years  
Alfred T. Mead, CSI, OFO, Lindstrom, MN, 4/03/01, 30 Years  
Rodney L. Provost, Instrmt Wrkr, OPHS, Athens, GA, 3/30/01, 23 Years  
Gerald G. Pruitt, FI, OFO, Marshville, NC, 3/10/01, 8 Years  
Susan L. Richey, FI, OFO, Fort Smith, AR, 4/07/01, 8 Years  
George A. Scholl, CSI, OFO, Newburgh, NY, 4/03/01, 35 Years  
Helen K. Szekeresh, Issue Analyst, EMS, Phoenix, AZ, 3/31/01, 21 Years  
Phillip A. Walker, FI, OFO, Schuyler, NE, 4/07/01, 22 Years  
Everett E. Webb, CSI, OFO, Oklahoma City, OK, 4/01/01, 28 Years  
Karen A. White, FI, OFO, Southwest City, MO, 3/24/01, 12 yrs.  
John H. Widmer, SVMO, OFO, Marshall, MO, 3/30/01, 16 Years  
Marie Wolf, FI, OFO, Broken Bow, OK, 3/31/01, 13 Years

### Leave Transfer Recipients

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1. <u>Jackie Copeland</u><br>OFO, DC; Illness       | 5. <u>Betty Morgan</u><br>OFO, AR; Family Illness     | 9. <u>Sue Engels</u><br>OFO, IA; Family Illness         |
| 2. <u>Annie Stewart</u><br>POB, MN; Serious Illness | 6. <u>Carolyn Woolfolk</u><br>OFO, DC; Family Illness | 10. <u>Aurbrey Tribble</u><br>OFO, FL; Serious Illness  |
| 3. <u>Linda Cole</u><br>OPPDE, DC; Serious Illness  | 7. <u>OFO-99-0027*</u><br>OFO, NC, Surgery            | 11. <u>John French</u><br>OFO, GA; Family Illness       |
| 4. <u>Linda Carey</u><br>EMS, DC; Surgery           | 8. <u>Tammy Love</u><br>OFO, AR; Surgery              | 12. <u>Clement Grangier</u><br>OFO, MD; Serious Illness |
| 13. <u>OFO-00-0006*</u><br>OFO, AL, Illness         | 29. <u>George Touns</u><br>OFO, LA; Serious Illness   | 45. <u>Osmar Ponce</u><br>OFO, CA; Surgery              |

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| 14. <u>Randy Haggard</u><br>OFO, TX; Serious illness          | 30. <u>Kelly Mitchell</u><br>OFO, DC; Serious Illness  | 46. <u>Marvin Miller</u><br>OFO, NE; Surgery           |
| 15. <u>Eusebio Galindo</u><br>OFO, TX; Serious Illness        | 31. <u>Tammy Bergerson</u><br>OFO; MO; Surgery         | 47. <u>Robert Vincenty</u><br>OFO, PR; Illness         |
| 16. <u>Becky Schneider</u><br>OFO, CO; Illness                | 32. <u>Geraldine Woods</u><br>OFO; TX; Surgery         | 48. <u>Kathy Richmond</u><br>OFO, LA, Serious Illness  |
| 17. <u>OFO-00-0030*</u><br>OFO, WV; Surgery                   | 33. <u>Sheila Mote</u><br>OFO; NC; Surgery             | 49. <u>Wilda Barnes</u><br>OFO, KY; Surgery            |
| 18. <u>Barbara Males</u><br>OFO, NY; Serious Illness          | 34. <u>Wilma Hoch</u><br>OFO, IA; Surgery              | 50. <u>Patricia Rogers</u><br>OFO, AR; Serious Illness |
| 19. <u>Marla Grubb</u><br>OFO, IN; Surgery                    | 35. <u>Frances Fletcher</u><br>OFO, MN; Surgery        | 51. <u>Linda Burkes</u><br>OFO, CA; Serious Illness    |
| 20. <u>Roberta Snyder</u><br>OFO, PA; Family Illness          | 36. <u>Wynne Molloy</u><br>OFO, AR; Serious Illness    | 52. <u>Anthony Laudadio</u><br>OFO, NY; Family Illness |
| 21. <u>Donald Palmer</u><br>OFO, KS; Family Illness           | 37. <u>Linda Reohr</u><br>OFO, NY; Surgery             | 53. <u>Judy St. Clair</u><br>OFO, KS, Illness          |
| 22. <u>Leslie Buzzell</u><br>OFO, ME; Surgery                 | 38. <u>Linda Kendrick</u><br>OFO, AR; Surgery          | 54. <u>Lisa Cleveland</u><br>OFO, GA; Maternity        |
| 23. <u>Stephanie Kane</u><br>OPPDE, DC; Surgery               | 39. <u>Sandra Wasserman</u><br>OM, MN; Serious Illness | 55. <u>OFO-01-0014*</u><br>OFO, FL; Illness            |
| 24. <u>Lula Wallace</u><br>OPPDE, DC; Maternity               | 40. <u>Steven Casey</u><br>OFO, WA; Serious Illness    | 56. <u>Tonya L. Johnson</u><br>OM, DC, Illness         |
| 25. <u>Margarita Fiol</u><br>OFO, PR; Illness                 | 41. <u>Timothy Trogdon</u><br>OFO, PA; Family Illness  | 57. <u>Cindy Jones</u><br>OFO, OR, Family Illness      |
| 26. <u>Lois Mullens</u><br>OFO, AL; Serious Illness           | 42. <u>Melanie Norman</u><br>OFO, TX; Serious Illness  | 58. <u>Denise Carpenter</u><br>OFO, CA; Maternity      |
| 27. <u>Dolores Bradley-Vargas</u><br>OFO, GA; Serious Illness | 43. <u>James Kile</u><br>OFO, NE; Surgery              | 59. <u>Kimberly Bryant</u><br>OFO, DC; Maternity       |
| 28. <u>Janet O'Byrne</u><br>OFO, MN; Serious Illness          | 44. <u>Annetta Turner</u><br>OFO, DC; Surgery          | 60. <u>OFO-01-0020*</u><br>OFO, IA; Maternity          |

\* While not consenting to the publication of their names, certain LTP recipients are assigned a number that they may provide to their co-workers if they choose so that donated leave may be transferred to their account. Any questions on the LTP should be referred to the Human Resources Field Office on 1-800-370-3747 for field employees and to the Classification and Compensation Branch for HQ employees on 202-720-6287.

## ISSUANCES

### Recent Agency Issuances

*By Corinne Calhoun, Administrative Services Division  
Telephone: 301-504-4233*

The following notice and directive have been issued since the April 2001 edition of the Beacon. Many recent issuances are available in an electronic format from the "PCDIALS" Lan Intranet server (\\Dchqoms1\fsisapps\pcdials\pcdials.htm) and from the "Agency Issuances" public folder in the Exchange mail system (Outlook).

\*\* Notice 13-01 (3/21/01) - Firearms in Work Establishments  
Directive 9020.1 (4/3/01) - Meat and Poultry Products Refused Entry Into the U.S.

Directives and notices are distributed automatically to applicable Agency employees and offices. Additional copies are available from:

USDA FSIS ASD PMS  
MAILDROP 5241  
5601 SUNNYSIDE AVENUE  
BELTSVILLE MD 20705-5241  
Telephone: 301-504-4242  
Fax: 301-504-4277

*\*\* Editor's Note: Notice 13-01 - Page 2, Part V, Section B, 3, second sentence is in error. The GSADC-8911101946 Title 18 Poster should be ordered through normal ordering procedures (**not** called in to the Supply Center).*

**To comment on this newsletter or to submit an article for publication, please contact:**

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*The current and past editions of The Beacon are available electronically in the "Newsletters" public folder on the Exchange (Outlook) mail system as well as on the FSIS Website at: [www.fsis.usda.gov/om/adserv.htm](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/om/adserv.htm)*

## Attachment 1

**Thrift Savings Plan**  
**C, F, G, Stock & Bond Index Fund Monthly Returns**  
 Updated April 9, 2001

Months	C Fund	S&P 500 Stock Index	F Fund	Lehman Brothers U.S. Aggregate Bond Index	G Fund
<b>1996</b> (Jan. - Dec.)	<b>22.85%</b>	22.96%	<b>3.66%</b>	3.63%	<b>6.76%</b>
<b>1997</b> (Jan. - Dec.)	<b>33.17%</b>	33.36%	<b>9.60%</b>	9.65%	<b>6.77%</b>
<b>1998</b> (Jan. - Dec.)	<b>28.44%</b>	28.58%	<b>8.70%</b>	8.69%	<b>5.74%</b>
<b>1999</b> (Jan. - Dec.)	<b>20.95%</b>	21.04%	<b>(0.85%)</b>	(0.82%)	<b>5.99%</b>
<b>2000</b> (Jan. - Dec.)	<b>(9.14)%</b>	(9.10)%	<b>11.67%</b>	11.63%	<b>6.42%</b>
<b>2000</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
April	(2.98)	(3.01)	(0.29)	(0.29)	.52
May	(2.05)	(2.05)	(0.03)	(0.05)	.54
June	2.44	2.47	2.07	2.08	.53
July	(1.56)	(1.56)	0.89	0.91	.53
August	6.19	6.21	1.46	.145	.52
September	(5.27)	(5.28)	.64	.63	.49
October	(0.40)	(0.42)	.66	.66	.51
November	(7.87)	(7.88)	1.65	1.64	.48
December	0.50	0.49	1.86	1.86	.48
<b>2001</b>					
January	3.55	3.55	1.65	1.63	.46
February	(9.12)	(9.12)	0.87	0.87	.42
March	(6.33)	(6.34)	0.51	0.50	.45
<b>Last 12 Months *</b>	<b>(21.63)</b>	(21.68)	<b>12.61</b>	12.53	<b>6.09</b>

Percentages in ( ) are negative.

The C Fund is invested in the Barclays Equity Index Fund, which tracks the S&P 500 stock index. The F Fund is invested in the Barclays U.S. Debt Index Fund, which tracks the Lehman Brothers U.S. Aggregate bond index. The G Fund is invested in special issues of U.S. Treasury securities.

The monthly C, F, and G Fund returns represent net earnings for the month, after deduction of accrued administrative expenses. The C and F Fund returns also reflect the deduction of trading costs and accrued investment management fees.

The C, F, and G Fund monthly returns are dollar-weighted: they reflect net earnings on the changing balances invested during the month.

**\* The C, F, and G Fund returns for the last twelve months assume, except for the crediting of earnings, unchanging balances (time-weighting) from month to month and assume earnings are compounded on a monthly basis.**

The C and F Fund returns vary from the index returns because of C and F Fund expenses, changing balances in the C and F Funds, and differences in returns between the Barclays funds and the underlying indexes. The index returns are time-weighted: they assume constant dollar balances invested during each month and throughout the period.

Future performance of the three funds will vary and may be significantly different from the returns shown above. See the "Summary of the Thrift Savings Plan" for detailed information about the funds and their investment risks.

## Attachment 2

**Minneapolis, MN Field Office Contacts**

Please dial 612-370-2010 or 800-370-3747 plus extension

Numbers in **bold** can be dialed direct (612-370-xxxx)**Human Resources Field Office (HRFO)****Western Section - Districts 1, 2, 3, 5 & 8**

(Covers Guam, Am. Samoa, HI, AK, CA, WA, OR, ID, NV, TX, UT, AZ, CO NM, IA, NE &amp; FPC, CRD &amp; OM Secys)

<b>2025</b>	<b>Louise Fox</b>	2538	Doreece Lawrence
2504	Jill Kubina	2578	Yvonne Martin
2513	Bob Kordosky	2583	Tom Johnson
2526	Barbara Walton	2586	Dawn Moser-Karstens
2530	Susan Sullivan	2591	Jeanne Horn

**Northeastern Section - Districts 9, 12, 13, 15 & 16**

(Covers WI, MI, ME, NH, VT, MA, RI, CT, NY, PA, DE, MD, NJ, DC, VA, NC, SC, &amp; TSC, Computer positions)

<b>2068</b>	<b>Steve Prochnow</b>	2522	Terry Rider
2506	Bob Kennerknecht	2527	Diane Lozinski
2508	Roxanne Preuss	2532	Lori Heath
2510	Kelly Bryan	2556	Bridget O'Connor
2517	Penny Carter	2589	Donna Gaunitz

**Central Section - Districts 4, 6, 7 & 10**

(Covers MN, ND, SD, MT, WY, KS, MO, AR, OK, LA, IL, IN, HRFO &amp; LERD)

<b>2273</b>	<b>Mavis Harrison</b>	2567	Tom Lehner
2514	Sandy Cox	2577	Rick Traetow
2524	Sue Robillard	2580	Keith McFarlin
2531	Yvonne Stoltz	2587	Mark Ford
2536	Pattie Patterson	2593	Michelle Jacobson
2559	Terry Evan	2512	Kamir Carrillo

**Southeast Section - Districts 11, 17 & 18**

(Covers OH, KY, WV, GA, FL, MS, TN, AL, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, OPHS Labs &amp; Safety)

<b>2069</b>	<b>David Reedstrom</b>	2525	Carolyn Peterson
2505	Charlene Baker	2546	Dianne Kaldun
2515	Ellen Barbeck	2554	Mary Lewis
2516	Valerie Yarbrough	2582	Karen Gorr
2520	Mary Davis		

**Systems Section**

<b>2019</b>	<b>Tom Reimler</b>	2537	LenNore Rassett
2015	Tammi Malmer (TDD)	2541	Linda Hicke
2518	Sandra Wasserman	2555	Cathy Strub
2519	Vacant	2557	Joyce Woelfel
2521	Jim Nelson	2558	Shannon Rofick
2528	Bonnie Falk	2572	Darcy Long
2529	Joan Dick	2575	Gwen Olson
2534	Becki Gunderson	2614	Gina Williams
2536	Vacant		

**Administrative Section**

<b>2053</b>	<b>Karen Benham</b>	2561	Crystal Gagnon
<b>2058</b>	<b>Jim Duoos</b>	2585	Melissa Fierke
2501	Deb Sullivan	2590	Jill Savoren
2503	Jolene Johnson	2609	Mary Weber
2511	Jody Kimura	2610	Sherri Vigness
2535	Nancy Bieber		

**Information Technology Section**

<b>2052</b>	<b>Dave Costanzo</b>	2533	Eric Carrier
2502	Alan Lilly	2576	Josh Schlueter

**Recruitment**

2570 Julaine Schmidt

**Benefits and Workers Compensation****2037 Brenda Fisher****Western Section** (covers Guam, AM Samoa, HI, AK, CA, WA, OR, ID, NV, TX, UT, AZ, CO, NM, IA, NE & FPC)

2544	Pat Orth
2548	Burt Housman
2579	Karen Werronen

**Central Section** (covers MN, ND, SD, MT, WY, KS, MO, AR, OK, LA, IL, IN & HRFO)

2553	Marcie Noyes
2584	Andrea Hokeness
2601	Anne Stewart

**Northeastern Section** (covers WI, MI, ME, NH, VT, RI, CT, NY, PA, DE, MD, NJ, DC, VA, NC, SC, & TSC)

2551	Linda Becker
2545	Renee Doughty
2523	Wahidah Seraaj-Klug

**Southeast Section** (covers OH, KY, WV, GA, FL, MS, TN, AL, PR, VI, & OPHS Labs)

2523	Celeste Gatz
2549	Sandy Suckow-Voss

**Case Management**

2547 Kay Caron

**Fax Numbers**

2005	Administrative	2007	Central
2013	Pay	2375	Benefits & Workers' Comp
2060	Systems	2376	Northeast
2062	Southeast	2377	Western